



The District's Dime

Going Beyond the Budget Book

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Adding It Up: What Do We Already Know About Next Year's DC Public Schools Budget?

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While most District agencies are eagerly awaiting the Mayor's budget to be released on March 28th, leaders at DC Public Schools have already received their [initial budget allocations](#) for the next school year. As in years past, principals and Local School Advisory Teams (LSATs) were given only about a week to digest the changes in the FY 2014 [Budget Development Guide](#) and make decisions about how best to staff their school, with their final school budgets submitted to DCPS last Thursday.

Here is our summary of the major changes schools will see next year, based on the DCPS FY 14 budget guide and initial school allocations. Note that these figures are preliminary and may change when the Mayor's budget is released, so, check back with DCFPI for updated analyses in the coming weeks.

School Funding Will Decrease from FY 2013 to FY 2014

Mayor Gray announced that the new Uniform Per Student Funding Formula foundation level, which is used to fund both DCPS and public charter schools, will increase by two percent in FY 2014, to \$9,306. Despite this increase, analysis of the preliminary allocations by DCPS to local schools shows an \$8 million reduction in general education funding, from \$358 million to \$349 million. (See [DCPS General Education Spending Tables](#)) General education spending per pupil — which excludes federal funds and funds for special education, Title I and ELL — will increase for elementary schools and education campuses but will fall for secondary schools, particularly magnet high schools, saw the steepest decline in average per pupil spending.

Increased investments at the primary school level

The local school allocations reflect an increased emphasis on literacy and language at the elementary school and education campus levels. Small elementary schools serving fewer than 250 students will receive at least a 0.5 staff position for art, music, and world language, while elementary schools between 250 and 400 students will receive a full-time allocation of each of these staff. Schools serving over 400 students will be allocated 1.5 of each of these positions.

Change in Small School Size

DCPS allocates staff different to schools defined as “small.” For FY 2014, the enrollment level used to define a small school increased, which means more schools will get the reduced staffing associated with smaller schools. Smaller schools were defined this year as those with fewer than 300. Next year, schools enrolling at least 400 students will qualify as a small school. This is the second year in a row that this definition has been changed.

Small schools, under this new definition, get less funding for administrative staff. For example, schools serving fewer than 400 are only funded for a half-time business manager and do not receive a clerk allocation, while larger schools get full-time staff for these positions. Small elementary schools (serving less than 400) are provided half or full-time allocations for the required art, music, and world language teachers and do not face less funding for this staffing.

Special Education Student-Teacher Ratios

The student-teacher ratio for some special education classrooms appears to have increased. This year, students with learning disabilities who needed full-time specialized instruction had student-teacher ratios of 12:1 at the high school level and 10:1 at the elementary and middle school level. Those have both increased to 15:1 this year. Early childhood autism classrooms have also increased from 3:1 ratios to 8:1 ratios.

School Librarians

Last year, schools enrolling fewer than 300 students were not funded for a librarian position. In the FY 2014 initial budget allocations, every school is funded a librarian, with small schools (under 400 students) receiving a half-time position and large schools receiving a full-time position. However, because the new definition of a “large school” is enrollment of at least 400 students, schools serving between 300 and 400 students that had funding for a full-time librarian this year will get funding only for a half-time librarian next year.

Out-of-School Time Programs

There is a change in how out-of-school time funding will be distributed to schools next year – funding for afterschool program staff now appears within individual school budget allocations to ease the hiring process for schools. The new line item, which encompasses Afterschool Programs, Evening Credit Recovery (ECR), and Proving What’s Possible extended-day grants, amounts to less than \$5 million across DCPS schools. DCFPI was informed that some additional funding for curriculum, security, supplies, field trips and other support is expected to be available again from the Out of School Time Program (OSTP) central office, and should appear in the Mayor’s budget. Total funding for OSTP is \$6.7 million total (including what is in school budgets), which keeps in place the cuts that were made for the current year. According to the budget guide, 15 schools will receive ECR funding and 59 schools will receive Title I and TANF funded afterschool programs.

Proving What’s Possible Funding

Last summer, DCPS announced that \$10.4 million in grants would go to 59 schools to implement innovative programming. For next year, the total Proving What’s Possible (PWP) funding totals \$6.5 million, which will go towards continuation grants (which will be specified in the Mayor’s budget next week), staff positions focused on literacy, and the extended day programs mentioned above. According to the budget guide, the PWP funding distributed to schools in FY 2013 were mostly one-time awards. However, 9 schools that began implementing extended-day programs in 2013 will be funded again next year to continue their programs. Eleven of the 40 lowest performing

schools will receive PWP funds to focus on literacy, including an assistant principal and reading specialist positions.

Looking for even more budget information? See below for a few handouts that were passed out by DCFPI at last night's DCPS budget briefing:

- [Budget Timeline for Education](#)
- [DCPS Budgeting Basics](#)
- [DCPS General Education Spending Tables](#)

There will be more information to analyze when the Mayor's budget does come out later this month, providing the full funding picture for DCPS and Public Charter Schools. DCPS staff have also committed to another budget briefing prior to the April 17th budget hearing, so keep checking the District's Dime for updates this budget season!